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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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DESP. NO.

FROM : AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

July 17, 1957
DATE

REF : ICATO 518

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	REC'D 7/26	INFO OTHER CIA-17, Com-10, TR-3, AG-8, FTB-2

SUBJECT: Government of Libya Request for Wheat

The Embassy has received a Note Verbale from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which the Government of Libya repeated its request for wheat and advised that it desired to obtain a reserve for emergencies. The Ministry added that the experiences of the last two years indicated that Libya needs a quantity of wheat ranging between 25 and 30 thousand tons in a year of drought.

In connection with the above, the Embassy is endeavoring to obtain a comprehensive picture of Libya's cereal crop. The Economic Officer of Embassy Benghazi advised that the Cyrenaican barley and wheat harvests are "reputed to have been the best in the past six years". The Embassy's inquiries in the markets of Tripoli also revealed that Tripolitania has exceptionally high and possibly record-breaking barley and wheat crops this season. The harvests will not be in until the end of this month, but the monthly review published by Barclays Bank for June 1957 contained the following significant statements:

"CYRENAICA: Cereals - The wheat and barley crops are progressing well in most areas and an unusually good harvest is now expected. Harvesting of the barley has commenced in many areas.

"The Council of Ministers of the Federal Government has approved the formation of a department to be named the 'Cereal Storage Department'. Its aims are: --

"(a) the storage according to scientific methods of the crops belonging both to the Government and to individuals;

"(b) fixing of prices on the basis of which the Government can act as a purchase of grain without prejudice to the interest of producers;

"(c) the sale of grain and provision of sufficient quantities in the market to satisfy customer's interests. The Department will [illegible] sales or purchases."

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/HR
REVIEWED BY G.M. Razi DATE May 6, 1982
FOR XR [illegible] DATE

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"TRIPOLITANIA: Cereals - The wheat and barley crops are being harvested and satisfactory yields are being obtained. In some areas, however, a little damage has been done by rain which has caused discoloration. In view of the size of the crop, Government are making plans to buy grain from the farmers and store it in Government warehouses. It is hoped that this scheme, once instituted, will continue and that Government will offer a sufficiently attractive price to encourage farmers in the planting of more grain. If there should be a surplus it will be exported provided a market can be found, otherwise the importation of wheat and flour will be restricted."

The Embassy has also made discreet inquiries at the Central Statistical Office of the Ministry of National Economy and at other Libyan offices. The preliminary reports obtained by friendly officials all confirm the existence of very successful wheat and barley crops. No statistics are available and won't be for many months, but the estimated yield for Tripolitania in 1957 was over 30,000 metric tons of wheat and over 100,000 metric tons of barley. These estimates can best be evaluated by comparison with the past production records which are reproduced below:

TRIPOLITANIAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, 1951-1954
(in metric tons)

Year	Barley	Wheat
1951	53,700	6,200
1952	74,650	7,324
1953	11,572	1,317
1954	30,000	2,700
1955	30,000	3,250
1956	84,000	22,710
1957	100,000 (estimate)	30,000 (estimate)

The Embassy will continue to investigate this matter further and upon receipt of more detailed statistics or more reliable estimates will advise the Department accordingly.

For the Ambassador

Rodger P. Davies

Rodger P. Davies
Counselor of Embassy

cc: Benghazi
USOM/L (Tripoli)

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